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A GROUP OF WORDS FROM *HÁVAMÁL* I IN THE
LIGHT OF MODERN NORWEGIAN AND
ICELANDIC DIALECTS

In this paper I shall attempt to fix more precisely than has hitherto been done the meaning of a group of rare and difficult words in part I of *Hávamál*. I shall do this by the aid of especially Norwegian dialect material, for as there is every reason to believe that this lay was originally composed in Norway so we shall naturally expect that the key to some of its difficulties may yet be found in the speech of the Norwegian people. The linguistic difficulties of the Elder Edda have generally been approached from the standpoint of classical Icelandic as the main guide, by the side of the additional light to be derived from Norwegian, Swedish and Danish speech and from other Germanic dialects. One can indeed not emphasize too much the great importance of classical Icelandic for this study. That remarkable instrument of literary expression enjoyed its period of bloom at a time when the Eddic lays were being put to writing in Iceland, and a few of these lays received their final form there. And we must not lose sight of the fact that the process of transmission of the older Eddic lays through three centuries or nearly that (assuming that the place of transmission is in all cases Iceland) left its stamp here and there upon the vocabulary of the lays. All that is clear. Yet I would like to take this occasion to emphasize the fact that the oldest Eddic lays were in Iceland an inherited long transmitted literature brought from Norway. And to further emphasize therefore the desirability of going in the first place to classical Old Norwegian and to Norwegian names and to the modern Nw. dialects for light upon such words and forms and meanings as occur only once or rarely in all Old Norse literature. It must be emphasized again also that in Iceland the older Norwegian speech lived a life of its own, made new acquaintances linguistically, assimilated new elements, lost old elements and in some respects took on new forms. And that therefore the traditional lays, brought from the parent home, preserved in their verse-forms many words, many forms, and many colorings of ideas in words and wordforms

that are impossible of interpretation on the basis of Icelandic linguistic material, but which may find their explanation even in modern Norwegian dialects. We Scandinavians of the second and the third generation here in America, who have witnessed, as it were, before our very eyes the modifications in our native language that have taken place here in the brief period of 75 years, will surely appreciate to the full the corresponding loss and change in Iceland in 300 years.

There are a great many words in the Elder Edda that occur there only once. Some of these occur nowhere else in all Old Norse literature; many occur rarely and then in what is evidently other meanings. And again the single other occurrence of the form is, perhaps, in a name, especially a nickname; or finally there may be several other occurrences but all in Nw. (not O.Ic.) texts. There are many considerations to be taken into account in trying to explain the distribution or the scarcity of a word in the old language. I cannot here take the time to speak of these. But I may at any rate say that if such a rare Eddic word is not recorded in the rich and varied literature of Iceland nor in the Icelandic language to-day the probability is very strong that it was not a part of living Icelandic speech at the time of the composition of the Eddic lays. The probability, while not a logical certainty, is so strong that it becomes a legitimate test for purposes of investigation. And I think we may also say that with regard to words whose other occurrences are rare and show more particularly Norwegian, or perhaps even peninsular, affiliations the same conclusion as to Norwegian home is required by the test. And in a special degree does this become the case of course if the ideas are there, but represented in classical Icelandic by other words.

I shall then in this brief paper ask your attention for some of the difficult words of *Hávamál I*. I hope chiefly to throw a little new light on the meaning of certain passages. Thereafter certain conclusions relative to the dialectal origin of the lay in question will suggest themselves to us.

If the points taken up in this paper are detailed and hard to follow without an edition before you, and therefore I run the risk of being dry, the attempts to make even the smallest

contribution to the understanding of the Elder Edda needs, I am sure, no apology before this society. The Elder Edda is one of the truly great documents of the world's literature. It is full of difficulties. The interpretation of parts of it has often had to be modified by reason of new light upon details. Only the completest understanding of all its details will give us in the end a complete understanding of the Edda as a linguistic document, as a piece of literature, as a record of belief, as a philosophy of life, and as a picture of early Norse and early Scandinavian culture.

I shall now turn to the words in question.

ILLR, *Háv* 9⁴, 51²; ILLA, *Háv*. 22.²

The adj. *illr* in O. N. means "bad, evil, harmful, hostile;" the idea the word conveys is that of a more or less active attitude toward evil and harm. The dictionaries seem to acknowledge only this moral idea, though Fritzner¹ and Cleasby-Vigfusson subdivide the illustrative passages into several groups according to the varying degrees or nature of the evil of which the passage speaks. In the passages listed above the editions and translations regularly render these words in this way. And yet it seems to me the poet cannot in any of these passages have intended to convey the idea of active evil. I shall quote the stanza, *Háv*. 9:²

Sá es sæll
es sjalfr of á
lof ok vit, meðan lífer;
því ill rǫð
hefr opt þeget
annars brjóstm ór.

The words *ill rǫð* are here taken in the sense "evil councils." But can that be the meaning? The poet pronounces him happy who gains praise and wisdom while he lives. Then he adds: *því ill rǫð hefr opt þeget annars brjóstm ór*. The stanza is a poetic variation of the preceding one which reads:

Hinn es sæll
es sér of getr
lof ok líknstafe.

¹ But see below p. 257.

² I am using Finnur Jónsson ed. *Eddalieder*, 1888, but for convenience of reference I give the Bugge numbering, *Norræn Fornkvæði*, 1867.

ódælla's víþ þat,
 es eiga skal
 annars brjóstom í.

The identity of thought in the two stanzas is indicated to the reader by the repetition of the significant words *sæll*, *lof* and *annars brjóstom* in the first, third, and sixth lines respectively. In stanza 8 the poet says: hinn es sæl, es sér of getr, which in stanza 9 becomes sá es sæll, es sjálfr of á; and in lines 5 the variation is in the verbs *þiggja* and *eiga*. Each stanza is composed of two halves, each half of which is complete in thought, the first stating the condition of happiness, the second contrasting with it the absence of that condition. That condition is defined in st. 9 as the gaining of *lof ok vit*; in st. 8 the nouns used are *lof ok líknstafe*. The condition which the poet here celebrates, then, is: knowledge what to do in the situations that may arise in life and the praise by others because of the possession of that quality. It is the lack of that quality which makes life *ódæll*, (st. 8), "trying, difficult,"—if one hasn't that quality but must take it "from the bosom of another."

Precisely in this way the poet has already used the positive form of the word *dælt* in st. 5, when he says: Vits es þorð, þeims víþa ratar, dælt es heima hvat. That is "good sense is necessary for him who goes out into the world, at home everything is a simple matter." And the illustration the poet adds in st. 5⁴⁻⁶ is: at augabragðe verþr sás ekki kann ok með snotrom sitr. The emphasis is then here upon not possessing this quality, the quality which in st. 6⁹, in an interpolated line is called *mannvit*, and which is so termed in a genuine line in 10.³ Now that which one takes from the bosom of another when one doesn't know what to do in any given situation is of course the council that one seeks and gets. It is a mental quality then that the poet everywhere here emphasises; there is nowhere in the context any thought of moral evil. The words *ill rþþ* in 9 negative the word *vit* of the line above and *mannvit* in 10³. And the meaning intended is clearly: if one is forced to seek the wisdom (*rþþ*) that one lacks (*ekki veit*) from another, one may find it worthless council (*ill rþþ*), for he may not know better what to do than you yourself. Therefore nothing is better than always to know yourself what to do. *Illr*, then,

here means "poor, of little worth," and I would render the stanza:¹

Happy he
who hath in himself
praise and wisdom in life;
for poor council
one oft hath got
from the bosom of another.

Now passing on to stanza 51, we have here, it seems to me, precisely the same use of the word. The stanza reads:

Elde heitare
brenn meþ illom vinom
friðr fimm daga,
en þá sloknar,
es enn sétte kemr,
ok versnar allr vinskapr.

Here *illom vinom* is usually taken to mean, "evil friends, enemies." But it must strike us at once as strange that the poet should use *illr* and *vinr* together for "enemy," when *óvinr* could as well be used—if *illr* here means hostile. And if *illr* mean "bad, evil" in this case, then, though not quite so contradictory, the passage remains at any rate somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. For of course if both noun and adjective here convey moral ideas they are more or less contradictory. The corresponding adjective *ild* is obsolete in modern Riksmål Nw., but in the dialects where the corresponding *ill* in its varying dialectal forms survives in full vigor one could not think of saying *ill ven* (*iil vænn*, *idl vèn*, *idd'e vin*, etc.) for in moral idea content the two terms are opposites. One would say *uven*, and precisely the same would one have done in O. N. Let us take an example. In *Háv.* 43, where the emphasis is upon *vinr*, and where it became a question of negating *vinr*, the poet uses the word *óvinr*, the regular word and the only one that would convey exactly the opposite meaning, namely "enemy":

Vin sínom
skal maþr vinr vesa,

¹In the translations here and below the attention is given primarily to the exact meaning, only secondarily to alliteration.

þeim ok þess vin.
 en óvinar sins
 skyle enge maþr
 vinar vinr vesa

Clearly the emphasis lies elsewhere in stanza 51 than it does here. It seems to me all vagueness will disappear from the passage if we take the word *illr* in exactly the same way as we have been obliged to take it in st. 9, namely, as meaning "poor, of poor quality, worthless." Then also the stanza follows naturally upon the thought of the preceding one (50) which celebrates the value of friendship in words that I translate as follows: Wastes the pine, standing on the barren plot; shelters nor bark nor needles. Such is the man, unloved of men; for what should he longer live? The idea "loved of men," the deep and genuine friendship of men, he then continues farther as the theme of st. 51, and the emphasis is here upon *illom* and the brevity of this kind of friendship. I would translate the stanza as follows therefore:

Hotter than fire
 burns among poor friends
 friendship five days;
 then 'tis quenched,
 when the sixth comes;
 withers the friendship all.

What the poet celebrates is the value of genuine friendship, all other is worthless. It isn't the brief duration of friendship among (former) enemies that he speaks of here in illustration, but the kind of firm and tried friendship which can stand all tests and when differences come not *versna* and *slokna i fimm dögum*.

Also in st. 34, we have *illr* and *vinr* combined and, as I believe, with exactly the same use of the word *illr*. While *ills vinar* may here be taken in the sense "false friend," there is e. g. no internal objection to it, I believe what was in the poet's mind was not "active enmity" or "treachery," but the less active sense of friendship of a poor quality, which does not draw men together often, lead them to frequent visits, however near the way may be. (Cp. *Háv.* 119). And finally, in *Háv.* 105 ⁴ *ill þgjöld* is certainly to be taken in the sense "poor reward" not "bad, evil" "led," "schlimm," etc.

In the passage in *Háv.* 22, to which I shall now turn the adv. *illa* occurs in the following stanza:

Vesall maþr
ok illa skape
hlær at hvívetna.
hitke veit,
es vita þyrpte,
at esa vamma vanr.

Here it is clearly not a moral quality but the intellectual quality the poet had in his mind, a fact which he indicates in the same stanza in the words *vita* and *veit*. What he would teach is not the *evil* of him who laughs at everything but the *folly* of it—as something that argues a poor quality of mind and the person doing so as foolish. I would then translate:

Of little account
foolish in mind
is he who laughs at everything;
that he knows not,
which know he ought,
that he is not free from fault.

In the passages we have discussed then it seems to me it will be necessary to correct the usual rendering. The idea of enmity and the necessity of being on one's guard against the machinations of foes does not occupy the prominent place in *Hávamál I*, usually supposed, but the idea of wisdom and self-reliance comes to occupy a much more prominent one. *Hávamál I* is essentially a glorification of good sense and of the man with a good mind. It raises that quality to the plane of the supreme good and the lack of it becomes the unredeemable blemish. It separates man into two classes, not as evil and good, but as wise and not wise.

We have then in these passages, as it has already been recognized that we have in *Háv.* 133⁶ (*erat maðr svá illr at einuge duge*), an older less active sense, either purely intellectual as in these passages or with physical signification as with reference to health (so *Háv.*, 69). Fritzner recognizes the presence of this meaning "ringe" in *Háv.* 133 and in two other citations. It is an interesting thing that these two other passages are from O. Nw. texts, namely the *Þiðreks saga*, and the

Björgynjar Kalfskinna. To these we shall now add the three passages in the *Hávamál* I.¹ Elsewhere the meaning of the word in Icelandic literature seems everywhere to be "evil, harmful, hostile," and Zoega in *Ensk Orðabók*, p. 209, records no other sense for modern Icelandic. The definitions given by Cleasby-Vigf., *Icel. Dic.* leave no room for this meaning nor is it present in any of the approximately 100 compounds of old and modern Icelandic that are there given. Fritzner gives in order the definitions, *umoralsk*, *syndig*, *fiendsk*, *skadelig*, *ubehagelig*, as the regular ones in three groups of citations, followed then by the three instances noted above. Also in the Shetland dialect the word regularly has the active moral sense. Jakobsen² gives in order the meanings *moralsk*, *slet*, *fiendsk*, *skadelig*, *ubehagelig*, *frastødende*, *fortrædelig*, *vred*, and the citations and most compounds show these uses. But he also records a meaning: "ringe, af liden værdi eller til ingen nytte," which is, however, not illustrated in the citations, but whose earlier presence is borne out by such compounds as *ill-best*, "det bedste af en række dårlige ting," (and he compares Feroese *ill-bestur*); *ill-hagerd*, "med dårlig holdning," and in other meanings; *ill-haiverd*, "om uldgarn, dårligt, løst og tyndt;" and *ill-wan*, s. "ringe forhåbning om noget."

In Norwegian dialects, however, the negative sense "poor, of little worth" survives in a considerable number of compounds. The following examples may be cited: *illbeitt*, adj. "that cuts poorly; *illvyrken*, adj. "of one who does his work poorly;" *ill-orken*, adj. "lazy;" *illeslungen*, adj. illy formed, Tel.³ *illhendt*, adj. "clumsy;" *illhugsen*, "sanseløs," Vestfold, *illhugsa*, adj. "uoplagt," S. Gubr.; *illendig*, "ussel, daarlig;" Berg. Stift; *ill-trivast*, v. "thrive poorly;" *illtrygg*, adj. "unsafe, restless;" *illro*, adj. "restless," Tel., etc. Examples taken from Aasen and Ross. These southwest Norwegian dialects and Shetland, then, have preserved in a number of survivals a use of the word *illr*, which is not found in modern Icelandic, nor in the Old Icelandic prose literature. Also in so far as it is found in the poetry it is found only in the earliest lays, as *Hávamál* and *Þrymskvíða*⁴ and in

¹ Also cp. above on *Háv.* 105.

² *Etymologisk Ordbog over det norrøne sprog på Shetland*.

³ The abbreviations of settlements are those used in Ross.

⁴ In *Þrymskvíða* 7.

the fragment of a *Njarþarmál* in the Snorre Edda.¹ In the later Eddic poetry e. g. the word everywhere has only the later idea of "evil, hostile."

This condition suggests the conclusion that the transition to the sense of "bad, evil," antedates the settlement of Iceland and was completed in Southwestern Norway before that event, and that these meanings of the word in these lays is traditional just as these lays are traditional. The use of the word *illr* in the *Hávamál* in this sense is then both a test of the age of the poem, which would be the 9th century, and of the home of the poem, which will be in Norway. This fact then substantiates in the study of a particular word the conclusions that Finnur Jónsson arrived at relative to home and age, from a study of the larger aspects of the poem.

It remains to note that whereas in Norway the physical and the intellectual sense of the word continued for a time at least by the side of the new moral one, in Iceland it was represented by such words as *ónytr* (*Háv.* 88); *vesall*, (*Háv.* 22, 69, *Atlamál*, 58); *litell* (*Atlamál*, 16; *Háv.*, 36; 37, *bu es betra þott litet se*, *Háv.* 36, *litel ero geþ guma*), etc. and other words, according as the emphasis was upon this or that concomitant idea as the cause or the result of the condition designated by the word. Cp. from prose the compounds, *litilverðr*, "of little worth;" *litillátr*, "humble;" *litilmannligr*, "of little manhood;" *gagnlauss*, "worthless," etc.

I shall now pass on to some other words in *Hávamál* I.

ÓMINNES HEGRI. *Hávamál*, 13. The stanza reads:

Óminnes hegre,
es of ǫlþrom þrumer,
hann stelr geþe guma.
þess fogls fjǫþrom
ek fjǫtraþr vas
i garþe Gunnlaþar

In stanzas 5-11⁸ Odin celebrates the value of good sense for him who would go out into the world. His philosophy is summed up then in 11¹⁻³ in the words: byrþe betra berrat brauto at, an sé manvit miket. Then he at once, st. 11⁴⁻⁶, contrasts with that the height of folly in the words: vegnest

¹ *Eddalieder* p. 96.

verra vegrat velle at, an sé ofdrykka ǫls; for, se says at the close of the next stanza: færa veit es fleira drekkir sins til geþs gume. Then follows the illustrations from his own experience at Fjalar's, where he once thought to gain the love of Gunnlaþ but came away defeated and humbled. He characterizes his own situation in st. 13 in the form of a metaphor while in the following stanza he gives the cause and draws his moral.

The general meaning of the st. 13 is perfectly clear: Odin found himself bereft of certain powers of mind, a state which he figuratively characterizes as being fettered in the feathers of the heron. This bird is called "óminnes hegri;" *óminnes* means "forgetfulness," the dictionaries record no other meaning in O.N. What Odin was bereft of, then, was his memory; but this can hardly be the meaning of our passage.

The real significance of the figure lies in the element of magic and the supernatural that is present in the words *hegri* and *fjǫtroþr* and also, though less so, in *fjǫþrom*. To begin with we have here the conception of the supernatural powers of birds, which in their dealings with men may take the form of forewarning and helpful council, as in the case of the three wagtails in the *Fáfnismál*, or of operations harmful to man as in this passage before us, figuratively present here to be sure.

It is the heron particularly that comes to be thought of as occupied in harmful activities. The gaunt and hungry-looking heron was thought of as always flying about ready to devour. Hence such survivals in modern Nw. dialects to-day as *hegri-leg*, adj. used in Tel. meaning "slugende, følgende sin drift, ubehersket" (Ross) and in Sætersd. the vb. *hægra*, "to devour," as *dai kaam hægrande te han*, "they came upon him as if they wished to devour him!"¹ But the heron's gauntness and hungry look, and his grey eyes, gave him in the popular imagination a spectral character and he came to be associated with the realm of ghosts and supernatural happenings, just as large staring

¹ This use is also found in Tysnæs, Söndhordland, though not recorded for Söndh. in Aasen or Ross, thus "om der var nogen person som var glubsk at æta so sa dei han svalde maten heil saasom higren"; "om der va ein langbeint kar sa dei han hadde bein so ein higri". I have these examples from Mr. Ingebrigt Lillehei, graduate student, U. Ill., Mr. L. has prepared in connection with the work of a Research course with me a Study of the Dialect of Tysnæs, which will be completed by him in Tysnæs, Norway, this summer.

eyes and especially gray eyes tended to associate with the one or the object so conditioned, supernatural qualities and powers. Hence such survivals in Nw. dial to-day as *hegre*, m. Sætersd. "person med lang hals, vid mund og opspilede øine," and the adj. *hegreleg*, adj. "lanky," Tel. and Sæt. We may also compare the Shetland word *hegri*, "long-legged and thin person, gaunt and simple-minded fellow," and the Eng. dial. *harnsey-gutted*, adj. "lank and lean." And I would also connect with our word the Shetland Norn adj. *hagerd* or *hagert*, "illshapen, clumsy," as "a pair hagerd-like body,"² and the Eng. adj. "haggard," without further going into the history of these last forms here.

Now the Sætersd. and Shetland use of the word contains in addition to the idea of gauntness and hungry appearance also that of a fixed, vacant, expressionless look. In the first place the application of the word *hegri* to a person is suggested in the outer appearance; but the vacant expressionless look is something more than that. It is associated with the heron as effect to cause, the one who looks so is under the baleful influence of the heron. This idea the word must have had already in O. N. times, and was present to the author of the *Hávamál* I. when he wrote this stanza. The poet records in a metaphor a matter of common belief that the meaningless look and the vacant eye of him who had indulged too freely at the feast is in the nature of a sudden numbing of the mind, the baleful work of the evil heron. The heron casts his spell over the drinker and his powers of mind are gone, he is no longer in control of his faculties, there has come over him a mental lethargy,—he is under the spell of the heron. This is what is meant in *Hávamál*, 13. Hence the poet says in line 3: *hann stelr geþguma*. Cp. the *Hervarar* riddle: *mungat, þat lemr margra vit*, or *Sigrdr.* 29, *margan stelr viti vin*, or the Norwegian proverb: *naar Ölet gaar ind gaar vetet ut*.

The magic transformation the poet has in mind is also indicated by the word *fjotraþr*, which here means "bewitched, spell-bound." This and closely related meanings survive in the word in southwestern Norway to-day in, e. g. the Tel. word *fjotre*, variant form *fjotre*, "*snakke stottrende, tale meningsløst*,"

² Jakobsen, *Et Ordb.* p. 272.

while the same word occurs in the form *fjatra* in other surrounding dialects (Ross). The most common form is *fjetra*, vb. which in Valdres means "sætte en fast som ved hexeri, gjøre at en ikke kan komme af stedet" (Aasen) and *fjetra*, adj. "ubevægelig, fast-tryllet," as *han sto so han va fjetra*, and *da fjetrast for'n*, which example comes from Orkedalen, and means: "det gik istaa for ham" (Ross). Finally also the word *fjøpbróm*, "feathers" has magic associations, being used in magic practices; see e. g. Bang: *Hexeformularer og magiske Opskrifter*, number 525, but especially 795; cf. also 1354.

As regards the word *óminni*, finally, we shall add to the meaning "glemsel, forgetfulness, Vergesslichkeit," recognized by the dictionaries, also now, if my interpretation of the above passage is correct, the meaning "mental lethargy," "tanke-lammelse." The corresponding word *minni*, has in O. N. the meanings: (1) memory, (2) something remembered, (3) a memorial toast, (4) consent. (see, e. g. Hægstad-Torp). The meaning of *óminni*, in our passage will suggest that *minni* may possibly sometimes in O. N. have reference to the act of thinking and reasoning instead of that of remembering. But to determine this question would require an examination of all occurrences. It is quite possible that the passage in *Háv.* 13, is the only one in which this (older) sense survives in O. N. literature.

I shall translate the stanza then:

A heron of lethargy
flutters o'er the feast,
wiling away men's wits;
with the feathers of that fowl
I was fettered
in the garth of Gunloth.

Turning now to the modern dialects we find no instance of this use to-day either in Nw. dialects or in Icelandic. However, Shetl. *minnet*, adj. "sindet, af et vist sindelag," Jakobsen, 516, seems like a survival, though it is not clear whether Scotch influence has not entered here. Cp. also *ill-minnet*, "ilde-sindet," p. 351. (see further Jakobsen).

HÆÞENN, GLISSER, GLAME. These three words occur in *Háv.* 31; none of them occur anywhere else in O. N. The stanza in which they appear is as follows:

Fróþr þykkesk,
 sás flóttu tekr,
 hæþenn gestr at gest.
 veita gǫrta,
 sás of verþe glisser,
 þott meþ grǫmom glame.

The adj. *hæþenn*, formed from the present stem *hæþ-* and the suffix *-enn*, signifying tendency, is recorded nowhere else, but the vb. *hæþa*, "mock," is not uncommon. It is recorded especially from Old Nw. texts, though not exclusively so, and is common in modern Icel. Similar formations are found elsewhere in *Háv.* as *gætenn*, 6³, "watchful;" *hræsenn*, 6², "boastful" both adjectives of tendency. The home of this type of verbal adjective is especially southern Norway,¹ but is as characteristic of the eastern as the western part of that region, and is found as a living formant both in Iceland on the west and in Sweden on the east. The home of the word *hæþa* to-day is the southwest Nw. dialects. It is found as *hæ* in the sense "spotte, haane," in Mandal, Tel. Hard. and Raabygdelaag, in other meanings elsewhere (as Hall. "scold").

The vbs. *glissa* and *glama* do not occur in Icelandic. Egilsson, *Lexicon Poetarum*, illustrates the former by reference to the Nw. *glise* and the Sw. *glisa at någon*. The general meaning of the lines is clear of course. The precise sense of each of these two words will perhaps be illustrated by the Norwegian survivals. *Glissa* belongs to a large group of derivatives on the basis of the root *gli*, "to shine." See Persson: *Beiträge zur Indogermanische Wortforschung*, Upsala, 1912, pp. 793-794. The simple stem is present in O. N. *glja*, "to shine, sparkle;" Shetl. dial. *gli*, "glitter, gleam;" in the Hardanger dial. of Nw. to-day *gljaa*, of the same meaning, and in the dial. of Nyland, Sweden, in the form *gli*, vb. "skimra," Vendell, *Nyländska Etymologier*, 12. Derivatives with varying suffixes and a considerable variation in meaning are found all through Germanic speech.

It is the Nw. derivatives in *-s* especially that we are concerned with here. The forms and their distribution are as fol-

¹ Anyone who is familiar with Norwegian dialects will have observed this or can verify it. For a good brief discussion see Aasen: *Norsk Grammatik*, 2 ed., §285.

lows: *glis*, m. "en som gliser eller haanler," Hall. (Ross); *glisa*, "le haanligt, fnise, bele noget," Berg. St., Helg., ordinarily used in the couplet, *glis o laatt*, or *glisa o læ* (Aasen). In this meaning I herewith record the word *glisa* as known in America by immigrants from Leikanger (Sogn), Søndhordland and Nordfjord. An earlier meaning is illustrated in the forms *glisa*, "glindse," Mandal and Tel. and "vise aabninger," Voss and Nordhordl. and one intermediate between these two in the expression: *han gliste me tennene*, E. Nw. The form with *-iss* occurs in the word *glissa*, "sparkle, shine" used at Eiken in Lister and in Sætersdalen. (Ross, pp. 251 and 951). In Leikanger, Sogn, the vb. was used in the middle of last century both in the form *glissa* and *glisa*, though the latter form was most common. This is on the authority of my mother who lived in Leikanger till her eighteenth year, 1854. The word meant: "mock at, make fun of." Cp. also Eng. dialectal "to gliss," "to leer," which, being Northern English, may be a loan from Scandinavian, but may also be a native formation.

In the Nw. use the word *glisa* or *glissa* means "to laugh at, make fun of," together with which meaning there are also a number of closely related earlier or later senses. The meaning "flee, laugh at" is specifically peninsular Scandinavian, southern Norway up to Nordland and east to Roslagen, Upland in Sweden, though limited in the north and east of this region and tending to divergent meanings. In Icelandic the meanings also diverge; as said above the vb. is not found in Icel. but the stem is represented in the noun *glis*, n. "glitter", with reference to clothes, finery, cp. *glismangari*, m. "seller of finery" (Cl. Vigf.). In modern Icel. the word evidently is not found. Shetl. dial. has only a deriv. in *-k*, *glisk*, of somewhat different use, Jakobsen, p. 222.

Evidently of closely related meaning is the word *glame* in the last line of our stanza. This word belongs to a large group of early and modern forms in *gl-m*, of which those with *ā* (*glam*), meaning "noise," are most frequently met with. The vowel variations are represented by *glumr*, "noise;" *glaumr*, "noisy merriment;" *glymja*, "to emit a loud sound," and for meaning change *gleymr*, adj. "glad, pleased." In Icelandic *glam* is

found coupled with both *gny* and *óþi*, being therefore used both with reference to the din of weapons and the uproar of voices; cp. also the compounds *vapnaglam* and *orðaglam*, and the nickname *glammaðr* (Grímr g.) "the loud-voiced" in *Landnámabók*. In the O.Nw. charter *D. N. 3, 210, XIV*, the nickname *stafnglami* seems to me to contain the word (*þórir stafnglami*, Thorir the prow-roarer). (so also Kahle, though Finnur Jónsson different). In mod. Icel. the corresponding *glam* means "tinkling sound." In Nw. dial. of southwestern Norway the word is commonly applied to the loud and noisy talk of a group of persons, as *glama* "bultre, larme," Tel. Sæt. Hard. Ryf. with corresponding noun: *glam*, n. (Aasen, Ross). And here, esp. Tel., W. Agder and Jæderen, the other words of the couplet cited above, *gny*, is still used in this sense, cp. Ross *gny*. vb. 2, Aasen *gny*, m. 1, 2, and Garborgs couplet *med gny og glam* in *I Helheim, Skrifter i Samling*, V, p. 143. Elsewhere, as Swed., the word shows the more neutral sense of "converse with", as in Öland, *glama*, "samspråka" and *glamm* "språksam" (Rietz), Dalarne (Elfd., Mora). Cp. also O.Sw. *glama*, "glädja sig." In O.Dan. *glamul*, *Tryggevælde* rune stone, has a good sense, "the eloquent one."¹

In *Háv. 31*, then, *glame* has the adverse sense of the noisy talk and guffaws of boisterous revellers; *glisser* on the other hand has reference to the merriment that finds expression in the sneer or derisive smile. I translate the stanza:

Clever he thinks him,
who takes to flight,
guest deriding a guest;
alas he knows not,
who at the feast sits fleering,
though with foes he gabble.²

¹ Wimmer *Danmarks Runemindesmærker*, II, 394.

² Or with alliteration:

Profound he thinks him,
who to flight takes,
guest deriding a guest;
not much knows he,
who mocks o'er the meal,
that with foes he's flouting.

SNÓPER, SOLGENN, *Háv.* 33. The words occur in the following stanza:

Árlega verþar
skylet opt fáa,¹
nema til kynnes kome,
sitr ok snóper,
lætr sem solgenn sé,
ok kann fregna at fœo.

If *opt* is taken in the sense of abundantly, as Detter-Heinzel, *Sæm. Edda*. II. p. 95, do, then the first line here is perfectly clear. There remains then in this troublesome stanza, the difficult word *solgenn*, and the precise meaning of *snóper*. *Snóper* occurs nowhere else in the EE. and has only one other citation in Fritzner, who translates: "hendøse tiden i ørkesløshed og kjedsomhed." This clearly cannot be quite the meaning in the stanza before us. Cleasby-Vigf. reads similarly, "idle dismally." Gering renders: "schnappen, mit leerem Munde kaubewegungen machen;" but this is hardly the attitude we should expect of the guest Odin brings upon the scene, even if he had not eaten very abundantly before leaving home in the morning. Also Brate in his excellent translation, *Sæmunds Edda*, 1913, p. 14, to cite only the last Edda translation, renders "snappar."² Icelandic does not help us much in this case, but the picture the *Hávamál* poet imagined will be perfectly clear to us if we bear in mind the following Nw. dialectal survivals of the word to-day: *snopa* "sidde og hænge ventende, som en betler, eller udtryksløst stirrende," (Ross), which occurs in Tel. Sætersd. and east as far as Land, e. g. *han sat der o snoopte o vænta*, Sæt. or *han gjeng o snoopar etter o faa*, Tel. with corresponding nouns and adjectives; cp. *snopa*, "en som snooper, ser snoopeleg ut," Tel., also *snop* m. snuser, snager, snyltegjæst, Ma. Sæt. Tel. Land. The adj. occurs as far north as Inner Sogn and west as far as Jæderen, but the home of the word in our meaning would seem to be par-

¹ Cod. Reg. *skyle maþr opt fá*. The emendation as above seems to me to offer the only satisfactory reading. See, however, Bugge, *Sæm. Edda*, p.—and Detter Heinzel, ed. p. 95.

² Gjessing renders "sidder snogen"; Mortenson "sitja keid"; Bray, "mopes"; Hægstad-Torp, *Ordbok*, however, aptly define: "sitja og hengjast."

ticularly Telemarken and Sætersdalen; cp. also *snóþen*, "flau," Feroese dial., and English dial. *snoop*, "be nosing around," which may be a loan-word from the Eddic word in this sense. I shall cite also the early Norwegian nickname from southern Norway: *snóþr*, as Eiríkr *snóþr*, Dipl. Munkel. (Bergen) 58, and *Dipl. Norv.* 12, 82, XIV; not to be taken, as Kahle *Arkiv*, XXVI, 252, but rather means Eiríkr "the snooper," "who goes nosing about," or, perhaps, Eirík "the hang-head." Elsewhere as even in Shetland and in Bergen, the meanings are quite divergent as *snoopa* "spise lækre ting," loaned from LG. *snopen*,¹ so O.Fris. *snopen* and Du. *snoepen*, "naschen," nibble. The word occurs both in Iceland and Sweden but in divergent meanings. *Snóþer*, *Háv.* 33, means then, as in Tel.-Sæt. to-day, "sit waiting for food," or as they would say to-day in Tel., *set o snoopar ette o faa*.

Solgenn adj. past prtc. of *svelga* is difficult. The only attempt to explain it is Richert's, *Försök till Belysning of mörkare Ställen i den Äldre Eddan*, pp. 6-8. This explanation is accepted in the *Vollständiges Wörterbuch* and elsewhere but rejected in the Leipzig edition, *Sæm. Edda*, p. 95. Bugge has no comment on the word; earlier translators and editors generally follow Egilsson who defines it *famelicus*. Richert cites in explanation the Västergötland expression *sätta sig svulgen*, said of one who has been so unfortunate as to get something caught in his throat, especially by reason of hurried eating, and he cites Rietz to the same effect. He therefore translates "sitter och gapar samt beter sig som han vore svulgen, -hade fått någonting fastsittande i svalget." The objection to this is that this meaning of *svulgen* is a local specialized sense, which is not established for West Scandinavian and may not even be very old. There is the objection furthermore that it assumes in *solgenn* an attitude which is contradictory to that established above for *snóþer*, for while the latter shows him to be "sitting expectant waiting for food" Richert's explanation of *latr sem solgenn se* not only puts him in the attitude of having eaten his fill but in a specific unpleasant condition as the result of having eaten too hurriedly. Realizing this, evidently, Gering who accepts Richert's interpretation translates *snóþer* "macht Kaube-

¹Larson, *Bergens Bymaal*. 216, and 262.

wegungen;” this however is evidently an attempt to fit *snóper* into the meaning which Gering accepts for *solgenn*. All this is unnecessary and indeed impossible because *solgenn* is evidently a further characterization of the idea contained in *snóper*, “sit expectant, waiting for food.”

As long ago as *Arkiv* III, pp. 97 ff, Nygaard showed that the present subjunctive may be used in O. N. in real comparative clauses and we have another such pres. subj. in *Háv.* 90. Hence *solgenn* here may and does describe the actual appearance, not an assumed one as Richert and Gering’s explanation forces one to do. The real difficulty reduces itself to the one that *svelga* is a transitive verb but that the past prtc. of it, *solgenn*, cannot possibly in our passage have transitive force. When Egilsson translated “famelicus” he associated it with verbal adjectives like *gættenn*, see above, 263, and similar formations. He gives it in his translation descriptive force, but offers no suggestion as to how this past prtc. form of a transitive vb. comes to have descriptive (modal) force and not as elsewhere resultive force. Possibly the rendering was suggested by his knowledge of some modn. Icel. dialectal use of the past prtc. *solgenn* which is not recorded in e. g. Zoëga. Gjessing renders “slugen” and Hægstad-Torp “gløypen,” but *solgenn* is not in its form an adjective of tendency, as these, formed from the present stem, but is a past prtc. form with perfective force. To be sure there would seem, in Swedish at least, to be a few participles in *-en* which are *participia facilitatis*, cp. Noreen, *Vårt-Språk* V, 268, who illustrates by *närgången* and *påflugnen*. But in Norwegian-Icelandic at least, the tendential sense inheres only, as far as I know, in the present stem. See also e. g. Aasen, *Gram.* § 285 (especially *Anmærkning* here).

The semasiological difference between these two types of verbal adjectives, those formed from the present stem, as O. N. *gæðenn*, *hæðenn*, and those derived from the past stem is that, whereas the former are purely adjectives of tendency stating a mental quality, the latter through their perfective form contain also something of the idea of external condition; and through this resultive idea they may finally come to be merely descriptive of appearance. Especially Norwegian abounds in verbal adjectives of this type both of transitive and intransitive verbs.

It is with words of this sort I would explain *solgen*. This semasiological phenomenon in past participial adjectives of strong verbs must have been especially characteristic of Old Norwegian speech. At any rate survivals in modn. dial. of strong past participles as adjectives corresponding to weak vbs. indicate this, such as e. g. *loken*, "udmattet, opgiven" (Aasen) and *sloten* "forlegen" from *luka* and *sulta*. Other dial. occurrences are: *sloppen* "sluppen, opbrugt, udmattet," as *sloppen o sømnig* (Søndfj.) and with prefix *andsloppen*, "aandelös (Hard. Søndh., Ryf.); *snoten*, adj. "slukøret," *snoten o snuppen*, Inner Sogn, and *han sat so snoten*; *snopen*, adj. "forbunden med skuffelse," Inner Sogn, "slukøret, skuffet," (I. Sogn. Ryf. Jæd.); *snorken*, adj. "skrumpen" (Aasen); *snorten*, adj. "misnöiet;" *slokken* adj. *vansmægtet, opgiven* (Aasen) *andslokkjen*, "aandelos" (Hard.), and *sogen*, adj. "svækket i kræfterne, udmattet (Aasen.) Cp. finally *gulpa*, tr. and intr. vb. which means "gave, snappe efter med munden" and "sluge, svælge," past prtc. *glopen*, slugt (Aasen) and "mager, udsultet" (Y. Sogn), Ross,¹ which seems to belong here as the vowel is open. We are obliged then, it seems to me, to accept that Egilsson was right in the rendering "famelicus;" modn. Nw. dial. parallels at any rate bear this out. *Solgenn* does not mean "voracious, over greedy after food, slugen, snogen, but rather describes the condition of being weak from hunger, "forhungret, udmattet," and showing this in his bearing; and because of this state he, as line six says, kann fregna at fjo. I would then translate:

His morning meal
a man should eat,
unless a-guesting he go;
or sits he expectant, dull,
and seems like one famished,
nor can ask about anything.

SNAPER. *Háv.* 62.

We have in this stanza a somewhat similar characterization as that given in the word *snóper* in st. 33, but while the cause

¹ Ross also gives a vb. *glopa*, to "gape" and *glopen* as an adjective of tendency "(a) slugen, (b) fremfusende." These, if the vowel here too is open, would seem to be derived from *glopen* or there is a formal confusion between *ō* and *ø* forms. Cp. O. N. *glópr*, nickname in *Dipl.*, *Nw.* IV, 38, XIII, Arkiv. XXVI, 228, which Kahle translates "Tor."

there was hunger, here the new word characterizes the one who before others finds himself friendless and undefended. The poet uses another ablaut form—*snaper*—of the same vb. used above, *snóper*, and the description is added to by the rhyming word *gnaper*. *Snapa* occurs once elsewhere in O. N., namely in *Lokasenna* 44, in Loke's answer to Beygver, when the latter speaks up in defense of Freyr. Loki says: *hvat's et litla, es logra sek, ok snapvist snaper*, "What is that little thing I see fawning and snappishly snapping? or in Norwegian: *Hvad er det lille, jeg logre ser, og snipent snapper*; not quite the same use, evidently, as in our stanza. The basic meaning of the root *sn-p* is "a short quick movement," as in the name of the bird "snipe," which gets its name from the short quick movement it makes with its bill as it picks its food. We have another use of the word in the name "sniper" for one shoots from ambush, and suddenly and stealthily picks off his victim (as now used of bandit sharpshooters in Mexico). The word is used in transferred sense in the passage in the *Lok.* 44, and in the English "snap at," used of a quick, biting retort, which again is from "snap at," of the snarling bark of a small dog. This meaning is represented especially by the forms with long *p* or the vowel, in Nw. d. as *snapp*, adj. "quick," Mandal, V. Tel., up through N. Berg. and in other ablaut forms (ablaut *i-a-u*) as in the expression *snippen o snau*, Sdm. "kort, tvær," and *snuppen*, Sogn, Hard. The meaning "downcast, exhausted" etc. is found especially in the *a* and *q*- forms (abl. *a-ó-aa*), as *snopen*, adj. "forbunden med skuffelse; uventet fortrædelig" (Ross), Inner Sogn, and in the meaning "skuffet, slukøret," I. Sogn, Ryf. Jæd. (see above) and *snqp*, m. "forlegen, flau person,"¹ Ryf. See also *snóper* above. The home of the word, as we see, is especially southw. Norway, and the meanings are here differentiated so that those with *a* and short *p* are descriptive of appearance, position, attitude, while those with double *p*, retain more particularly the idea of quick motion, literally or in transferred sense. The differentiation of meaning is not always the same in other parts of Norway, but is almost exclusively so in sw. Norwegian. There is every reason therefore,

¹ The ablaut row. *i-e-i* is represented in *snipen* adj. "gnidsk, karrig." Jæd., and *snipen* (open e-like i) "tvært afbrydende, fortrædeligt uventet" (Ross).

to assume that this grouping was present here also in O. Nw. *Snoper* in *Háv.* 63, therefore, seems to mean "sit hanging one's head" or as Ross defines the corresponding past prtc. to-day *snopen* (Sogn, Ryf. Jæd) "forbunden med skuffelse, skuffet, sluköret" (Ross p. 728).

By a comparison with the eagle, that hangs its head forward, looking for its prey as it comes to the sea, the stanza pictures the hang-head attitude of the man in the given situation. Finally if we take the word *aldenn* to be not the word *aldenn*, "old," but the same as *alden*, "gående med aldedrag," Namd, d. (cp. *alda*, *olde* and *olle* "billow," Southw. and No. Nw.), we may render the stanza as follows:

Gasps and hangs his head,
as to the sea he comes,
eagle at the heaving ocean.
So with a man
who amongst many sits,
and defenders has few.

DÆLSK. *Háv.* 57. Without quoting the stanza I shall here add merely the following note on this word. It occurs only here in the Elder Edda, and elsewhere in O. N. is more especially Nw. as the few citations in Fritzner show. Of its remoter kin see Falk & Torp, *Et. Ordbog* under *dvæle* and *dölge*. The recorded Nw. parallels are: *dælskast* "tøve, fare med planløst arbejde", and *dølska*, f. "tosse, klodrian" cited for Sogn by Ross. To these I add *dølsk*, adj. "som lidet ved eller har at sige, inde-sluttet", Leikanger, Sogn, (also the noun *dølska* f. as above); this word and meaning on the authority of my mother. The Shetl. dial *dolsket*", tåbelig, indskrænket", which exactly corresponds with the Leikanger adjective, is clearly the same, though possibly from some form with *o* or *u*. The latter is represented outside of W. Scand. in Swed. *dålsk*, "trög" (Rietz), with somewhat varying meaning it is to be observed. In the passage in *Háv.* therefore *dælsk* means "of limited mind, not possessing much knowledge," as evidenced by the fact that one sits and has nothing to say in company.

It was my wish in the notes here offered first to throw a little light upon the meaning of these rare and in part disputed words in *Hávamál* I.

In closing I wish to emphasize the great importance of the Norwegian dialects for the study of Eddic lays. There is a wealth of material there that the student of the old language and the old literature can ill afford to neglect. And especially in the western and the southwestern dialects from Söndmøre down to Telemarken, conservative as these are in many respects, do illustrative forms and meanings survive to aid us often where we least expect it. Unfortunately scientific knowledge of Norwegian dialects is not yet far advanced. We need special studies of every separate dialect, with a view to bringing out all their word-stock, all their phonological and inflexional characteristics and everything that gives the dialects their individuality as dialects. The significance of such material also for the study of Old Norse literature would be tremendous. Who will do this work? Where can be found the workers who have the ability and the training to do it? And where the means of publishing the material so gathered?

Hávamál I, among the oldest parts of the Elder Edda, was composed in Norway in the ninth century, we may assume. Its vocabulary points with a considerable degree of definiteness to (a) that part of southwestern Norway which extends from Telemarken on the east, and Lister and Mandal on the south, the coast up to Bergen on the west and Inner Sogn and (western) Hallingdal on the northeast. This is a considerable territory then, parts of which are covered only by a word or two; these outlying parts are the north and the east of this region. The real home of the *Hávamál I* remains (b) that bounded by West Telemarken and Hardanger on the east and north—then to the coast on the west and south. We arrive at this limitation of territory in the effort to localize the lay by tests of the existence of the words, the forms of the words and the meanings of the words. In this connection I add here the evidence of the following words: *skygna* (*Háv.* 1³), “spy out, look searchingly around, enter and look close at”, a verb which belongs especially to Ryfylke, Jæderen, Sætersdalen and Telemarken; *rata* (*Háv.* 5²), “wander, travel, experience by much travelling”, is known in nearly the whole region (a) but with the most significant correspondence of meaning in Raabygdalag and east to Mandal, (within [b] therefore); *hræsenn* (*Háv.* 6²), “boastful, talkative in self-praise”, survives in several words in common use in

region (b) but also in part elsewhere; *þunnr* with reference to sound, "noiseless" (*Háv.* 7³, *þunno hljópe*, "wrapt attention"), is a use that is only recorded for Granshered in Telemarken, e. g. *tunnhøpyrd* adj. "that hears sharply", (cp. *tjukkhøpyrd*, "hard of hearing"), but with related transferred meanings in Dalarne and Jæderen; *hlæge* (*Háv.* 20⁴), "object of laughter, scorn", exhibits this adverse sense in Bergens Stift and Telemarken; *vreka* (*Háv.* 32³) refl. "break with one another, start a quarrel", is a derived sense of *reka* which is a characteristic use of the word in Telemarken to-day and nowhere else as far as I can find; cp. *reka upp*, "slaa op med en, gjøre opsigelse" and *de hev rekji upp*, "aftalen er blit hævet"; and there are a few other words that seem to belong especially to this region.¹

We may then now go a little farther than Finnur Jónsson does, who said of *Hávamál I*: "Det er vistnok betydeligt—ældre end omtr 950. Det er afgjort et norsk digt; ingensteds findes så mange direkte hentydninger til norske forhold som her," *Den isl. Lit. Hist tilligemed den oldn.* 1907, p. 49. While all parts of Norway² shared in the colonization of Iceland the major part of the colonists came from Western Norway.³ We may limit the territory in question to what I have designated region (b) above as the home of *Hávamál I*. To this region the dialectal correspondences unmistakably point. These conclusions find substantiation also in other ways. Thus Prof. Magnus Olsen has identified *Fitjongr* of *Hávamál* 78, with the estate Fitjar, in Stord, Hordaland, *Stedsnavnestudier*, 1912, p. 63-76. And we shall perhaps not venture too much if we conclude that the whole of the original *Hávamál* belongs, with *Háv. I*, to the region (b) as defined above.⁴

April 30, 1914.

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¹ That an especially East Nw. word like *kóper*, *Háv.*, 17, also occurs does not alter the fact.

² And even Sweden, Denmark and the Celtic West, witness *Islendingabók* and *Landnámabók*.

³ The Shetlands show especial dialectal affiliation with Agder, Norway; see Jakobsen *Det Norrøne Sprog på Shetland*, 1897, p. 15.

⁴ There came to my notice as I was finishing above article Lindroth's "En omtvistad Etymologi," pp. 57-65 in *Xenia Lidéniana*; see below, p. 297; the word etymologised is *illr*. Lindroth's derivation is from **iðilaR*, "onyttig, oduglig, värdelös, af ringe värde," which he, as I believe, fully establishes. I shall speak of this article again in *Proceedings*, II, 1.